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ABSTRACT

Based on personal experiences in organizing and evaluating initiatives designed to improve the management and assessment of learning, these 10 papers provide a critical commentary on current piecemeal education and training of young people in Britain. "Setting the Scene" (Rob Halsall) reviews key steps taken post-1979 to raise the average level of aspiration and attainment in education and training. "Continuity and Change in Post-Compulsory Education and Training Reform" (Denis Gleeson) questions the likely success of an educational reform policy that is driven by market principles and does not include a unified system of post-16 provision. "National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)--A Way Forward?" (Phil Hodkinson) views NVQs as an initiative that has helped transform thinking about vocational education and training, but draws attention to their shortcomings and offers suggestions as to how these might be addressed. "Vocationalism and Vocational Courses 14-16" (Mike Cockett) points out that characteristics of schools and communities that operate against the success of vocational elements have not been addressed and expresses a concern for how the education system is failing the lower and lowest attaining students. "Caught in the Middle--Transition at 16+" (Mike Cockett, John Callaghan) reports results of a study that cast doubt on the efficacy of the National Curriculum in motivating students and providing a broad and balanced curriculum. "Core Skills--The Continuing Debate" and "Records of Achievement--Rhetoric or Reality" (Rob Halsall) have as their main focus the question of whether the core skills and recording achievement initiatives are achieving, or can achieve, their primary purposes. "Rationales for Student-Centered Learning" (David Hustler, Phil Hodkinson) explores different sets of arguments for student-centered learning and learner autonomy. "Higher Education--A Clear Sense of Vision?" (Rob Halsall, David Hustler) shows that this sector has played a significant role in maintaining a disunified and hierarchical system in the secondary sector; now higher education is subject to several forces for change. "Chaos or Coherence, Progression and Continuity" (Mike Cockett) explores the notion that, although it might be impossible to arrive at a

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coherent system, there is a distinction between deterministic and culpable chaos. The book contains 194 references and an index. (YLB)

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